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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/774,964	02/09/2004	Thomas A. Trabold	8540G-000148	5570
27572 7590 12/26/2007 HARNESSE, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C. P.O. BOX 828 BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MI 48303			EXAMINER RUTHKOSKY, MARK	
			ART UNIT 1795	PAPER NUMBER
			MAIL DATE 12/26/2007	DELIVERY MODE PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/774,964	Applicant(s) TRABOLD ET AL.	
	Examiner Mark Ruthkosky	Art Unit 1795	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 September 2007.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 3-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 10-16 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1 and 3-9 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention. Applicant does not teach the executable logic required to perform the claimed functions.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by OR, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over DiPierro Bosco et al. (US 6,103,409.)

The instant claims are to a fuel cell stack comprising:

a fuel cell having an inlet, a flow field in fluid communication with said inlet and an outlet in fluid communication with said flow field;

a vaporized water source in fluid communication with said inlet; a differential pressure transducer repeatedly measuring a differential pressure across said flow field and generating a set of differential pressure signals; and

a controller in communication with said differential pressure transducer, said controller having executable logic for determining a differential pressure fluctuation parameter from said set of differential pressure signals and control circuitry for controlling said vaporized water source in response to said differential pressure fluctuation parameter.

The instant claims are to a product, a fuel cell stack. The claims include intended use limitations and process steps. A recitation of the intended use of the claimed invention must result in a structural difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in order to patentably distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. If the prior art structure is

capable of performing the intended use, then it meets the claim. Further, MPEP 2113 states, “Even though product-by-process claims are limited by and defined by the process, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process.” Thus, the use of the claimed controller and the steps performed by the claimed controller do not limit the product claim. The controller only need be capable of performing the steps to read upon the claim.

DiPierro Bosco et al. (US 6,103,409) teaches a fuel cell stack comprising a fuel cell having an inlet, a flow field in fluid communication with said inlet and an outlet in fluid communication with said flow field (see figure 1 and col. 3, line 65 to col. 5, line 37); a vaporized water source in fluid communication with said inlet (col. 1, lines 48-65; col. 2, lines 14-end); a differential pressure transducer for measuring a differential pressure across said flow field and generating a set of differential pressure signals (paragraph bridging cols. 4-5); and a controller in communication with said differential pressure transducer, said controller having executable logic for determining a differential pressure fluctuation parameter from said set of differential pressure signals and control circuitry for controlling said vaporized water source in response to said differential pressure fluctuation parameter (col. 5, line 1 to col. 6, line 25.) The intended use limitations, such as “for determining a differential pressure fluctuation parameter as a representative statistical value from said set of differential pressure signals” have been considered, but do not result in a structural difference with respect to the claimed invention.

With regard to the process steps of intended use by the claimed logic, determination of patentability is based on the product itself. The prior art does not teach the process steps of intended use by the claimed logic, however, the product-by-process claims or the process steps included in the product claims are the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 9/27/2007 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Rejection of claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. Applicant respectfully asserts that the executable logic is sufficiently disclosed in compliance with the enablement requirement. Applicant discloses that: "[t]he controller logic is provided in real-time computer 164 for execution in real-time computer 164. In this regard, controller logic 166 is also denoted as 'software' and/or a 'program' and/or an 'executable program' within real-time computer 164 as data schema holding data and/or formulae information and/or program execution instructions. Controller logic 166 is, in a preferred embodiment, machine code resident in the physical memory storage of computer 164." Paragraph [0038]. Applicant goes on to disclose that in various embodiments, the controller logic captures the differential pressure measurement signals and executes a Fast-Fourier-Transform on the data. Paragraphs [0044]-[0046].

This argument is not persuasive. While applicant shows that the logic is provided in a real-time computer and is software or a program, the disclosure does not enable one of ordinary skill in the fuel cell art to make and use a fuel cell with executable logic for determining a differential pressure fluctuation parameter as a representative statistical value from said set of

differential pressure signals. Further, the parameter and statistical value are not disclosed.

Direction of determining these values are not disclosed. Applicant has not disclosed to one skilled in the art what logic is required, how to write such logic, what parameter is determined or what statistics are applied to obtain this value.

Rejection of claims 1-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) OR under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over DiPierno Bosco et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,103,409.)

Applicant notes that DiPierno-Bosco et al. does not disclose Applicant's executable logic for determining a differential pressure fluctuation parameter as a representative statistical value from said set of differential pressure signals and accordingly the varied output actions of the fuel cell.

In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show this feature of applicant's invention, it is noted that Applicant's executable logic for determining a differential pressure fluctuation parameter has not been disclosed as noted in the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112. DiPierno-Bosco et al. disclose executable logic for determining a differential pressure fluctuation parameter as required by the claim. The statistics derived from the computer program are not structural elements of the invention. Thus, the cited prior art anticipates the claimed subject matter.

Applicant further points out that the differential fluctuation parameter is different from the DiPierno Bosco et al. parameter because Applicant's parameter is based on the statistical value determined from the executable logic. The statistical value from the executable logic

allows for circuitry control and output based on, for example, a root-mean-square (rms) of the set, the variance, or the standard deviation.

This argument is not persuasive. The intended use limitation “for determining a differential pressure fluctuation parameter as a representative statistical value from said set of differential pressure signals” have been considered, but does not result in a structural difference with respect to the claimed invention. Structural weight is given to the fuel cell stack and to the controller, for example a computer, however, because the invention is to a product, patentable weight is not given to the data collected by the computer. MPEP 2114 states under the heading noted: APPARATUS CLAIMS MUST BE STRUCTURALLY DISTINGUISHABLE FROM THE PRIOR ART. While features of an apparatus may be recited either structurally or functionally, claims directed to an apparatus must be distinguished from the prior art in terms of structure rather than function. In re Schreiber, 128 F.3d 1473, 1477-78, 44 USPQ2d 1429, 1431-32 (Fed. Cir. 1997.) MANNER OF OPERATING THE DEVICE DOES NOT DIFFERENTIATE APPARATUS CLAIM FROM THE PRIOR ART A claim containing a “recitation with respect to the manner in which a claimed apparatus is intended to be employed does not differentiate the claimed apparatus from a prior art apparatus” if the prior art apparatus teaches all the structural limitations of the claim. Ex parte Masham, 2 USPQ2d 1647 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1987.) Therefore, the differential fluctuation parameter is not different, as claimed, from the DiPierno Bosco et al. parameter.

In response to applicant’s assertions with regard to the relationship between the controller and the circuitry, the response of the previous section further applies to the control of circuitry, which is a process limitation or step.

The claims do not require specific circuitry. From this, the circuitry of the reference teaches the required circuitry claimed.

Applicant further argues that as the control circuitry acts differently based on the unique differential fluctuation parameter based on the statistical value from the executable logic, Applicant's claimed invention as amended provides "an accurate determination of the onset of flooding status and control", "optimization of stoichiometry with a comparable optimization of air compressor capacity, efficient management of rapid power transits, and data for effective management of stack purge." Paragraph [0054].

Again, the acts and results noted in the response are not structural claim limitations that are given patentable weight. The unique differential fluctuation parameter noted by Applicant has not been disclosed and the claims do not contain limitations that reflect structure of a unique fuel cell that has not been taught in DiPierno Bosco. For these reasons, the claims stand rejected.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37

Application/Control Number:
10/774,964
Art Unit: 1795

Page 9

CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Examiner Correspondence

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mark Ruthkosky whose telephone number is 571-272-1291. The examiner can normally be reached on FLEX schedule (generally, Monday-Thursday from 9:00-6:30.) If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Patrick Ryan can be reached at 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free.)

Mark Ruthkosky

Primary Patent Examiner

Art Unit 1745

Mark Ruthkosky
12-18-2007